

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Miles City CVB FY 08/09 marketing plan is to strengthen the Miles City economy by promoting economic development of the area through tourism. The marketing plan will guide Miles City's promotional efforts therefore increasing awareness of and visitation to Miles City and the surrounding area. The Miles City CVB will continue to seek out consumers of and partners of our tourism product to enjoy our cultural, historical, & recreational adventures.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Miles City CVB will include Miles City and the area surrounding the city limits for approximately 50 miles.

2. STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

STRENGTHS

Miles City's strengths are many, beginning with its location and varying scenic beauty and including its people, who are eager to share the Montana experience with visitors. Specifically, our strengths are:

- 1. The changing landscape.** Miles City area consists of badlands, flatlands and rolling hills. The badlands cover area east of Miles City include the Terry area, flatlands and rolling hills cover the remaining area surrounding Miles City. Unusual sandstone formations make for interesting subjects and backdrops for photographers, bird and wildlife observers and those who want to more deeply appreciate the effects of nature over time on these soft ever-changing formations. The prairies of Forsyth and Terry are known for their fertile soil and ability to sustain many types of agricultural crops, from wheat and barley to hay, grasses, safflower, sugar beets and oats. In addition, these flat lands are ideal for grazing cattle, horses and sheep, as well as the antelope, deer and elk that thrive in the area.
- 2. Abundant recreational opportunities nearby.** This would include hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, boating, golfing, wildlife watching, photography, and horseback riding. Close proximity to recreational bodies of water like Spotted Eagle, Dean S Reservoir, 12 Mile Dam, Yellowstone River, and Tongue River. There are several fishing access sites like Kinsey Bridge, Bonfield, Matthews, Powder River Depot, Roche Juane and Moon Creek to mention a few.
- 3. Our rivers & streams.** Miles City is located between two rivers, the Yellowstone and the Tongue River. These rivers, known worldwide for their excellent ability to support species such as catfish, sturgeon, walleye, gold eye, small mouth bass, sauger, Northern Pike, are fed by countless creeks and streams that support diverse species of fish and birds, such as Canadian geese, pelicans, ducks of all kinds, cranes and aquatic mammals.

4. **Nature trails & agate hunting.** Miles City has nature trails to offer to hikers, bikers and nature enthusiasts. Included are Big Sky Country Byway, Terry Scenic Overview, Calypso Trail, the Terry Badlands (Wilderness Study Area), Woodruff Park, and Pirogue Island. Agate hunters are attracted to Miles City to scout for the unique geological anomalies (moss agates) that can only be found in the free-flowing Yellowstone River.
5. **Interstate highway & 2 state highways.** Interstate 94 passes through Miles City and Highway 59 North towards Jordan and 59 South towards Broadus, and Highway 12 east towards Baker. A majority of our visitors use these highways to either enter or leave our area, and are favored by those who have limited time to spend in Miles City. Miles City is conveniently located between Dickinson, ND and Billings, MT also the largest town in an 80 miles radius.
6. **Western history & cultural tourism.** Our city got its name from General Nelson Miles who was famous for his military history and his achievements with the Native Americans. Miles City is home to Ft Keogh which was a military cantonment, a remount station, a fort and finally a University of MT Experiment Station. Miles City is steeped in history from the military, to the railroad, the cattle industry, the sheep industry and the location to see it all is the Range Riders Museum. There are numerous historic opportunities to visit while in Miles City such as the Custer County Art & Heritage Center, Wool House Gallery, Ursuline Convent, Historic Volkswalk, Ghost Tours, and three historic districts listed on the National Register for Historic Places.
7. **Clean air, clear skies and open spaces.** Like most of Montana, we are blessed with clear, clean air and beautiful, endless skies. Visitors are often in awe of the things we take for granted, and we try to use it to our advantage by including pictures of our open, hilly country in our promotional pieces.
8. **Season Events.** Miles City is proud of its local events that draw visitors to the area from many states. Some of our events include the Cowtown Beef Breeders Show & Ag Trade Show, World Famous Bucking Horse Sale, Pioneer Days, Eastern MT Fair, Demolition Derby, Crazy Days, Wine & Food Festival and Christmas Stroll.

WEAKNESSES

1. **Perceptions.** Many visitors are burdened with the mistaken impression that all of Montana looks like Glacier or Yellowstone National Parks. While these two world-famous National Parks are a definite draw to Montana, the images potential visitors see of them don't prepare them for the equally beautiful landscapes that can be found in the area around Miles City. Indeed, visitors are often awe-struck by the colorful geological formation and the sandstone faces and figures that seem to have been carved in the sandstone hills east of Miles City.
2. **Limited signage.** Regulations by the MT Department of Transportation limit signage on the Interstate highway, which hinders efforts to direct visitors into Miles City to visit the attractions and western history.

Challenges persuading travelers to go to Main Street when they think Haynes Avenue is our main business street.

3. **Need for improved two-lane roads.** While we are grateful for the progress the Montana Department of Transportation has made on such roads as Highway 59 North to Jordan, 59 South to Broadus, Highway 12 to Roundup and Highway 12 to Baker, there are still portions of those roads that need repair, repaving and/or wider shoulders to ensure the safety of those increasing numbers of travelers who prefer getting off the Interstates. Furthermore, because improvements have, in many cases, been so long in coming, our reputation for questionable roadways still precedes us. We are hopeful that the continuing improvement of federal, state and county roads will help to improve that reputation.
4. **Lack of understanding of Miles City's historic importance.** Many people are unaware of the important role General Nelson A Miles and General Keogh have played in U.S. history. Beginning with its acquisition in the Louisiana Purchase to the importance of Ft Keogh and Milestown and continuing today with the role the area plays as a hub for eastern Montana, Miles City's impact on history is largely unknown or misunderstood.
 - Even those who claim to know American History are sometimes unaware of the extent of Captain William Clark's exploration and research in the Yellowstone Valley during the Lewis and Clark Expedition for 1804-1806.
5. **Lack of public transportation.** While Miles City has a regional airport, air and ground transportation is lacking in our area. Commercial flights in and out of Miles City are on a daily basis, beginning again when the essential air service contract is renewed in July. While train service is limited to freight, busses only run along 1-94 on a very limited schedule. Taxi service and car rental is limited to business hours. While these are regional and national problems that Miles City cannot solve alone, it can be important to potential travelers when they are planning conventions or meetings for which Miles City is being considered.
6. **Limited convention and event facilities.** Miles City is very limited to the size of the convention we can draw to Miles City due to a lack of facilities. We have Miles Community College to work with but when they are in class, we have limited number of attendees to less than 100.
7. **Lack of understanding of tourism regions and CVB's.** A large sector of Montana citizens as well as most out-of-state visitors are unfamiliar with the existence or geographic boundaries of tourism regions or the role of state supported VIC's or CVB's. The lack of understanding prevents residents of the state from developing a sense of cohesiveness that could develop into a clearer vision for the region as a whole.
8. **Long distances from U.S. population centers.** Miles City is located between Dickinson, ND at 300 miles, Billings, MT at 150 miles, and Rapid City, SD at 235 miles. Miles City is the hub for all of Eastern Montana.

9. **Lack of extended store hours.** The Miles City downtown businesses have been slow to change with the times by extending store hours until 8 PM to accommodate the tourists.
10. **Lack of community awareness of tourism's importance.** There are members of the County Commissions, City Councils, Chamber of Commerce members and the Montana Legislature who are reluctant to accept the message that tourism is important not only to the state but to our area also. This attitude is slowly changing, but the message needs to be repeated each time a new commission, council or legislative representative is elected. Additionally, the very business that most benefit from tourism, such as restaurants, gas/convenience stores and retail stores are many times least aware of the importance of out-of-town business and tourism dollars.

3. GOALS

1. To inform and educate travelers both in-state and out-of-state, about the attractions, events and recreational experiences available to them in the Miles City area.
2. To provide economic benefit from tourism to Miles City and area businesses.
3. To assist Miles City, museums, event organizers and those involved in tourism-related events in methods of promoting, growing and organizing events that will draw more visitors. This will include a cooperative marketing program, grants and directions on how to apply for grants from other organizations if the event or program does not qualify for assistance from Travel Montana sources.
4. To promote events and the community through PR and consumer advertising efforts and through assisting in hosting press tours for Miles City and the surrounding area.
5. To educate the general public, including those who live in Miles City, about the structure and importance of tourism in Montana, and the economic impact tourism and recreation has on the state.
6. To work with local and state government agencies to help improve existing tourism infrastructure and work on planning new visitor destinations and attractions within the Miles City area.
7. To promote the historical significance of the Miles City area, especially the history of the military and the pioneers.
8. To increase arrival, length of stay and expenditures of current Miles City visitors by raising their overall level of awareness of Miles City's historical, cultural, recreational attractions and activities.
9. Seek appropriate marketing opportunities and partnerships with other tourism organizations, events and activities.
10. Reach more potential visitors in a more efficient manner by partnering with Custer Country and combine our dollars to eliminate unnecessary duplication and strengthen our marketing presence.

4. THE MARKETING PLAN TIES TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This year's marketing plan will focus on the following goals.

Goal 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.

1.1 Implement highly targeted consumer advertising and promotion campaigns, based on strategic marketing plans, and track/report results.

1.2 Promote Montana to targeted groups and events, emphasizing off-peak season.

1.3 Work collaboratively with other tourism marketing partners to plan and implement priority marketing efforts.

Goal 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history (historic sites, museums, art, music, etc.).

4.1 Promote Montana's existing historic and cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Goal 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services, for target customer markets.

5.1 Cultivate opportunities to leverage private and public dollars to create tourism products and attract new tourist markets.

Goal 7: Improve Montana's transportation system for both residents and visitors.

7.1 Increase air service capacity to and from Montana cities.

5. OBJECTIVES

1. Continue to reach 140,000 visitors by advertising in the Custer Country Travel Guide.

2. Increase inquiries 5% by continuing to work cooperatively with Custer Country and Travel Montana through Joint Ventures.

3. Increase event attendance by 10% using targeted marketing efforts with event partners.

4. Increase attendance at cultural and historical attractions by 10% using targeted marketing efforts.

5. Increase web user sessions and length of visit by 15%.

6. Host at least one Press/FAM Trip.

6. TARGET GEOGRAPHIC MARKETS

The geographic markets we have targeted are chosen on the basis of encouraging continued visitation from those areas that have traditionally shown interest in visiting or re-visiting the Miles City area, information gathered by ITRR and inquiry reports from Travel Montana. Areas targeted will be:

- The Midwestern states of Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin and North and South Dakota.
- Regional neighbors due to our central location and easily accessed by outlying areas using Interstate 94 or State Highways 59 and 12.(Promote regional medical center)

7. TARGET DEMOGRAPHICS

Our target demographics are based upon research by ITRR, inquiry statistics. We have targeted four major demographic groups as follows:

- **Traditional Family Travelers: Adults 35 + years of age**
 1. Travel by car
 2. Average age 53
 3. Income less than \$60,000 (According to ITRR profiles, 50% earn less and 50% earn more
 4. Spend an average of 4.56 nights in the state
 5. Primarily travel with family members.
 6. Average group size is 2.46 people

Interests

 - Scenic driving
 - Nature photography
 - Camping/hiking
 - Wildlife viewing
 - Relaxing and memorable experience
- **Mature adults comprised of two subcategories: Empty Nesters and Mature Adults**

Active Empty Nesters 50+

 1. By 2010, 1/3 of the U.S. population will be age 50+
 2. Over 30% of the nations 78 million baby boomers are Empty Nesters.
 3. Possess a youthful outlook on life and travel (“50 is the new 30”)
 4. Prefer activities such as camping, hiking, photography and wildlife viewing.

Mature Adults

 1. Primarily married couples
 2. Median age of 62
 3. 60% are retired
 4. Average household income of \$60,000+
 5. A portion travel by motorhome

6. Differ from Active Empty Nesters in that they prefer to look rather than do
- **Western History & Culture Buffs**
 1. Adults 35+ who are traveling with or without children
 2. Household income of \$60,000+
 3. Interest in western history and culture
 4. Likely to visit a historical site as part of their vacation
 - **Convention & Meeting Planners**
 1. Book small-to-medium conventions
 2. Convenient location
 3. Offering Unique Western hospitality
 - a. Local history
 - b. Culture
 - c. Recreation
 - d. Outdoor activities

8. MARKETING METHODS

Media tools used to reach the goals listed above may include:

Print Advertising

- Print advertising designed and placed to reach the Miles City destination audiences and to coordinate with editorial coverage or advertorials copy whenever possible
- Collateral pieces:
 - Custer Country Vacation Guide
 - Miles City Brochure
 - Regional newspapers

Public Relations

- Media guides and kits
- Advertorial/editorial coverage in magazines
- Press releases prepared by marketing firm of Custer Country or Miles City Chamber Executive Director
- FAM tours for travel writers, TV and radio producers and photographers
- Travel Montana's internet site
- Custer Country's internet site
- Miles City Chamber's internet site
- Photos supplied to magazines, newspapers, and other media groups by Miles City, Travel Montana and other contributors

Miscellaneous

- Events promotion and brochures through our Cooperative Marketing Program, Joint ventures with Custer Country.

Miles City CVB – FY2008/2009 Budget Overview

Marketing Support

Administrative (no more than 20%)	\$4,200.00
Include marketing plan development	
Opportunity Marketing (no more than 10%)	\$2,000.00
Cooperative Marketing	\$4,000.00
Joint Ventures	\$3,000.00
TAC Meetings	\$2,000.00

TOTAL	\$15,200.00
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Consumer Advertising

Radio	\$3,000.00
Print (Newspaper)	\$3,000.00

TOTAL	\$6,000.00
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PROJECTED BUDGET **\$21,200.00**

The project budget figure was arrived at by using the following figures:

Projected Revenue: \$21200.00

Rollover from FY2008: \$0.00

TOTAL: \$21,200.00

Preliminary Approval

ORGANIZATION NAME: Miles City Chamber of Commerce Convention & Visitors Bureau

APPLICATION COMPLETED BY: John Laney

PROJECT NAME: Radio Advertising

Need for the Project:

It is our desire to aid in the promotion of activities put on in our community. It is with advertising help that we can grow these events and increase attendance with the hope of creating more overnight stays.

Develop Objectives:

It is our goal to become active in event planning for some of the events in Miles City that are not meeting their full potential as far as what the event can do for the community. With the aid of advertising funds and a realistic marketing goal we feel we can grow some of the events we currently have in place and also stimulate other groups who may want to pursue events of their own. We currently have several events that we can grow with the proper marketing and radio will reach this target audience in a successful way. This not only meets our needs but it also is key to meeting the objectives of the strategic plan.

Measurable Outcomes:

3. Increase event attendance by 10% using targeted marketing efforts with event partners.
4. Increase attendance at cultural and historical attractions by 10% using targeted marketing efforts.

Portions of Marketing Plan supporting this project:

It fits into the Goal 2 category for both the state plan and ours.

Does this project support the Strategic Plan? Yes

This project supports the following Strategic Plan Goals:

Goals 1, 4, 5

PROJECT BUDGET

PROJECT COSTS	LODGING TAX	OTHER FUNDS	TOTAL
Event Promotion	\$3,000.00	0	\$3,000.00
Project Total	\$3,000.00		\$3,000.00

We will monitor the events that we will partner with to insure they will fit our strategic plan and are actually events that can be grown. We will insure they are non-profit sponsored events and can realistically generate overnight stays. We have the availability to utilize 2 area radio stations that cover our entire regional trade area as well as those travelers in the area. Both stations have good listenership and very affordable rates. We can monitor success by exit interviews with the event sponsors looking for reports on out of town, out of state participants as well as interest shown in future events.

Preliminary Approval

ORGANIZATION NAME: Miles City Chamber of Commerce Convention & Visitors Bureau

APPLICATION COMPLETED BY: John Laney

PROJECT NAME: Print (Newspaper)

Need for the Project:

It is our desire to aid in the promotion of activities put on in our community. It is with advertising help that we can grow these events and increase attendance with the hope of creating overnight stays.

Develop Objectives:

It is our goal to become active in event planning for some of the events in Miles City that are not meeting their full potential as far as what the event can do for the community. With the aid of advertising funds and a realistic marketing goal we feel we can grow some of the events we currently have in place and also stimulate other groups who may want to pursue events of their own. We currently have several events that we can grow with the proper marketing and print advertising that will reach this target audience in a successful way.

Measurable Outcomes:

3. Increase event attendance by 10% using targeted marketing efforts with event partners.
4. Increase attendance at cultural and historical attractions by 10% using targeted marketing efforts.

Portion of marketing plan supporting this project:

It is again our goal to target consumer advertising and promotion campaigns. With our help we can be more proactive as well as more budget minded.

Does this project support the Strategic Plan? Yes

The project supports the following Strategic Plan Market Opportunities:

This is to be used as a team effort approach to marketing existing as well as new events.

This project supports the following Strategic Plan Goals:

Goals 1, 4, 5

PROJECT BUDGET

PROJECT COSTS	LODGING TAX	OTHER FUNDS	TOTAL
Event Promotion	\$3,000.00	0	\$3,000.00
Project Total	\$3,000.00	0	\$3,000.00